

# Mineral Industry Surveys

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## TIN IN MAY 2006

Domestic consumption of primary tin in May was estimated by the U.S. Geological Survey to be essentially equal to that in April and about 10% lower than that in May 2005. Estimated domestic consumption of primary tin in the first 5 months of 2006 was about 8% below that in the comparable period of 2005.

The Platts Metals Week average composite price for tin in May was \$5.73 per pound, slightly higher than that in April and about 9% higher than that in May 2005.

In May, the independent small-scale tin mining sector in Indonesia was affected by violent attacks on some of the suction boat operators that were working off the north coast of Bangka Island near the town of Belinyu. This area was the leading growth region in Indonesian "unconventional" mining in 2005. Reports indicated that the local government had temporarily closed down the region in response to the violence. The independent smelters association, the Association of Indonesia's Tin Industry, suggested that the Belinyu district had accounted for about half of its members' concentrate supply, and the destruction of or damage to hundreds of boats/platforms would cut their production from about 4,000 metric tons per month (t/mo) to 3,000 t/mo. Indonesia was the world's second leading tin producer (CRU International Ltd., 2006).

Organization Metalvert SA de CV, a scrap firm in San Luis Potosi, Mexico, reportedly was considering the restart of an idle tin smelter and was seeking feedstock for the project. Industry observers noted that the world tin concentrate market is currently tight, and it may be difficult for Metalvert to secure feedstock. San Luis Potosi also is home to the Metales Potosi SA tin smelter, which has been idle for years. There are no plans to restart the Metales Potosi smelter (American Metal Market, 2006a).

In Bolivia, reports indicated that the Government might seize the Vinto tin smelter operated by the Sinchi Wayra SA unit of Glencore International AG (Baar, Switzerland). Bolivia's President announced that private operations that had not received any investment should revert to the Government. The

Vinto smelter has the capacity to produce 12,000 metric tons per year (t/yr) of refined tin and formerly was owned by Cia. Minera de Sur (Comsur). Glencore acquired the assets of Comsur for \$220 million in 2005 (American Metal Market, 2006b).

In China, reports indicated that the country's two leading tin producers, Yunnan Tin Co. and Liuzhou China Tin Co., were holding talks to explore forming a combined organization. The new entity would be called China Tin Group. The combined company could produce up to 60,000 t/yr of refined tin, based on current output (Metal Bulletin, 2006).

Silver Standard Resources Inc. (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada) updated a mine feasibility study on the Pirquitas silver-tin-zinc deposit in northern Argentina. The new report lists proven and probable reserves of 18.6 million metric tons of ore, grading 0.2% tin and 0.61% zinc (CRU Week in the News, 2006<sup>§1</sup>).

## Update

On July 7, 2006, the Platts Metals Week composite price for tin was \$5.56 per pound.

## References Cited

- American Metal Market, 2006a, Metalvert seeks feed for tin smelter's restart: American Metal Market, v. 114, no. 25-2, June 27, p. 7.
- American Metal Market, 2006b, Tin market unruffled by Bolivian leader's threat: American Metal Market, v. 114, no. 24-1, June 19, p. 7.
- CRU International Ltd., 2006, A plan for Indonesia: CRU International Ltd., June, p. 3.
- Metal Bulletin, 2006, News: Metal Bulletin, no. 8947, June 5, p. 10.

## Internet Reference Cited

- CRU Week in the News, 2006 (June 22), accessed June 22, 2006, via URL <http://www.crumonitor.com>.

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<sup>1</sup>A reference that includes a section mark (§) is found in the Internet Reference Cited section.

TABLE 1  
SALIENT TIN STATISTICS<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

	2005	2006		
	January- December <sup>p</sup>	April	May	January- May
Production, secondary <sup>e, 2</sup>	10,800	900	900	4,500
Consumption:				
Primary	35,900	2,750 <sup>r</sup>	2,760	14,500
Secondary	10,800	689 <sup>r</sup>	697	3,460
Imports for consumption, metal	37,500	3,370	NA	NA
Exports, metal	4,330	232	NA	NA
Stocks at end of period	5,400	5,400 <sup>r</sup>	5,380	XX
Prices (average cents per pound): <sup>3</sup>				
Metals Week composite <sup>4</sup>	443.03	569.88	572.77	XX
Metals Week New York dealer	329.69	420.43	421.27	XX
London, standard grade, cash	304.00	401.00	400.00	XX
Kuala Lumpur	301.83	400.93	405.65	XX

<sup>e</sup>Estimated. <sup>p</sup>Preliminary. <sup>r</sup>Revised. NA Not available. XX Not applicable.

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits, except prices.

<sup>2</sup>Includes tin recovered from alloys and tinplate. The detinning of tinplate (coated steel) yields only a small part of the total.

<sup>3</sup>Source: Platts Metals Week.

<sup>4</sup>The Metals Week composite price is a calculated formula, not a market price, that includes fixed and finance charges and a risk factor. It is normally substantially higher than other tin prices.

TABLE 2  
METALS WEEK COMPOSITE PRICE<sup>1</sup>

(Cents per pound)

Period	High	Low	Average
2005	496.08	469.82	483.04
2006:			
January	521.70	492.15	503.78
February	517.39	499.65	507.70
March	533.89	508.89	517.91
April	605.47	508.89	569.88
May	609.29	527.83	572.77

<sup>1</sup>The Metals Week composite price is a calculated formula, not a market price, that includes fixed and finance charges and a risk factor. It is normally substantially higher than other tin prices.

Source: Platts Metals Week.

TABLE 3  
TINPLATE PRODUCTION AND SHIPMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

Period	Tinplate waste (waste, strips, cobble, etc.) (gross weight)	Tinplate (all forms)			Shipments <sup>2</sup>
		Gross weight	Tin content	Tin per metric ton of plate (kilograms)	
2005 <sup>P</sup>	W	2,270,000	7,670	3.4	1,860,000
2006:					
January	4,890	183,000	584	3.2	166,000
February	4,640	174,000	591	3.4	138,000
March	4,870	185,000	626	3.4	166,000 <sup>r</sup>
April	4,640	169,000 <sup>r</sup>	602 <sup>r</sup>	3.6	144,000
May	4,640	179,000	610	3.4	NA

<sup>P</sup>Preliminary. <sup>r</sup>Revised. NA Not available. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

<sup>2</sup>Source: American Iron and Steel Institute monthly publication.

TABLE 4  
U.S. TIN IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION AND EXPORTS<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons)

Country or product	2005	2006		
		March	April	January- April
<b>Imports:</b>				
<b>Metal (unwrought tin):</b>				
Bolivia	5,400	166	692	2,700
Brazil	2,150	100	75	326
Chile	20	--	--	--
China	4,510	354	508	1,340
Indonesia	5,220	445	114	2,380
Malaysia	1,530	119	--	169
Peru	18,300	1,580	1,750	5,390
Thailand	45	--	--	25
United Kingdom	67	19	--	24
Other	264	255	235	512
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,500</b>	<b>3,030</b>	<b>3,370</b>	<b>12,900</b>
<b>Other (gross weight):</b>				
Alloys	7,460	867	418	3,350
Bars and rods	1,030	171	137	486
Foil, tubes, pipes	8	(2)	(2)	(2)
Plates, sheets, strip	324	32	43	111
Waste and scrap	3,530	136	53	901
Miscellaneous	3,310	218	178	805
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,700</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>5,650</b>
Exports (metal)	4,330	375	232	1,450

-- Zero.

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

<sup>2</sup>Less than 1/2 unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5  
CONSUMPTION OF TIN IN THE UNITED STATES, BY FINISHED PRODUCT<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons of contained tin)

Product	2005			2006				January- May
	January December <sup>p</sup>	April			May			
		Primary	Secondary	Total	Primary	Secondary	Total	
Alloys (miscellaneous) <sup>2</sup>	1,240	149	--	149	147	--	147	676
Babbitt	276	35	W	35	20	W	20	110
Bar tin and anodes	275	26	W	26	26	W	26	129
Bronze and brass	3,700	93	131	224	108	138	246	1,300
Chemicals	8,680	616	W	616	616	W	616	3,360
Collapsible tubes and foil	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
Solder	12,200	559 <sup>r</sup>	250	809 <sup>r</sup>	564	250	814	4,420
Tinning	740	37	--	37	37	--	37	223
Tinplate <sup>3</sup>	7,670	602 <sup>r</sup>	--	602 <sup>r</sup>	610	--	610	3,000
Tin powder	W	W	--	W	W	--	W	W
White metal <sup>4</sup>	W	W	--	W	W	--	W	W
Other	1,070	33 <sup>r</sup>	8	41 <sup>r</sup>	31	9	40	263
Total reported	35,900	2,150 <sup>r</sup>	389	2,540 <sup>r</sup>	2,160	397	2,560	13,500
Estimated undistributed consumption <sup>5</sup>	10,800	600	300	900	600	300	900	4,500
Grand total	46,700	2,750 <sup>r</sup>	689	3,440 <sup>r</sup>	2,760	697	3,460	18,000

<sup>p</sup>Preliminary. <sup>r</sup>Revised. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; included with "Other." -- Zero.

<sup>1</sup>Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

<sup>2</sup>Includes terne metal.

<sup>3</sup>Includes secondary pig tin and tin components of tinplating chemical solutions.

<sup>4</sup>Includes pewter, britannia metal, and jewelers' metal.

<sup>5</sup>Estimated consumption of plants reporting on an annual basis.